



Dear California and Nevada Public Health Officers:

I am writing to you on the behalf of members of Pacific Swimming requesting that you allow swimming pools to reopen in order to serve the exercising and conditioning needs of our athletes. Pacific Swimming is one of the 59 Local Swim Committees (LSC) located within the United States. We currently have over 14,000 registered swimmers located throughout the San Francisco Bay Area Counties; the coastal counties of Northern California from Monterey to the Oregon border; the Stockton-Modesto area of California's Central Valley; and the Reno-Carson City-Lake Tahoe area on the California-Nevada border. Our membership also includes over 100 year-round swim teams, over 600 certified coaches and over 600 other non-athlete volunteer members.

Probably the first thing that comes to mind when thinking about the issue of opening up swimming pools is a crowded, unstructured and boisterous venue. However, I can assure you that our swim practices are the complete opposite. Our athletes are very dedicated and motivated. Practices must be supervised by a swim coach who has passed all the accreditation requirements required by United States Swimming, the National Governing Board for the sport of swimming in the USA. Our youngest swimmers (typically 8-10 years of age) swim one or more miles per practice session, while our older swimmers (typically 11-18 years of age) swim several miles per practice session. We also serve the needs of older athletes during periods when their college is not in session.

During the normal course of training, dryland training is frequently included throughout the course of the week. However this is strictly considered supplemental to their hours spend conditioning in the swimming pool. During the time that pools have been closed, many of our coaches have been able to offer dryland workouts via videoconferencing. However, unlike many sports, dryland cannot begin to replace in water exercise. Sport health physicians at United States Swimming believe that after several months of not being able to swim, our athletes are basically deconditioned. They have advised all coaches that once the athletes are permitted to return to the water, they must begin slowly with the goal of increasing the intensity of the workouts by about 10% per week. They are also convinced that allowing these athletes to resume conditioning workouts can be done in a safe and responsible manner and have published guidelines to our local swim teams and coaches on how this can be accomplished. United States Swimming and Pacific Swimming also have a firm policy that our local swim teams and coaches must follow the recommendations and guidelines issued by local health officers and authorities.

As we learn more about the SARS-CoV2 virus it appears that it is most often transmitted via close and prolonged personal contact. With this in mind, we are asking you to allow our athletes to return to outdoor swimming pools where their practices will be closely supervised to ensure social distancing is enforced. Athletes will be instructed to arrive at practice wearing face coverings, already in their bathing suits, maintain correct

*Inspiring a passion for swimming and making a difference in the lives of our members*

social distancing during practice and leave practice in their bathing suits and face coverings. Temperatures can be monitored upon entry and hand sanitization can be provided. Locker rooms could be limited to a single stall available if individual swimmers require use of the restroom during practice and after which the restrooms would be cleaned. Swimmers and coaches would be highly motivated to conform to these conditions on penalty of being denied the privilege of attending future practices. Since swimming pools have different physical layouts, all swim team wishing to return to practice would be required to work with the owner/manager of the pool to ensure that they have a “return to the water” plan that meets the guidelines that you provide to us.

I have included links to a letter sent to Governor Newsom jointly signed by five General Chairs of LSCs located in California and also to the United States Swimming Guidelines on Returning to Practice document both of which are located on our Pacific Swimming website.

Thank you for your dedication and leadership during this extraordinary time.

Sincerely,

*David Cottam*

5/18/2020

David Cottam

Date

General Chair, Pacific Swimming

<http://www.pacswim.org/userfiles/news/articles/documents/738/facility-reopening-plan-guidelines.pdf>

<http://www.pacswim.org/userfiles/news/articles/documents/746/newsom-letter-signed-5-9-2020.pdf>